## AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 14, line 4, of the specification as follows:

FIG. 16 is a flowchart illustrating the operation of the node encoder 1120. Referring to FIG. 16, a continue flag is encoded in step 1600. As described above, the continue flag indicates whether or not a current node is the end of a compressed bitstream. If the current node is not the end of the compressed bitstream, the continue flag is set as 'true'. Otherwise, the continue flag is set as 'false'. In step ~~1600~~ 1610, node position information is encoded. In step 1620, it is checked whether or not the merged node is a P node. If the merged node is a P node, P-node encoding is carried out in step 1630. Otherwise, S-node encoding is carried out. Steps 1600 through 1640 are repeatedly carried out until all nodes are encoded (in step 1650).

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 17, line 16 of the specification as follows:

FIG. 21 is a flowchart illustrating the operation of the node decoder 1910. Referring to FIG. 21, a continue flag is decoded in step 2100. In step 2110, position data is decoded. In step 2120, it is checked whether or not a current node is a 'P' node. If the current node is a 'P' node, the current node is decoded using a 'P' node decoding method in step 2130. Otherwise, the current node is encoded using an 'S' decoding method in step 2140. Steps 2100 through 2130 are repeatedly carried out until all nodes are decoded (in step 2150).